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**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA**

ANIKA OKJE ERDMANN-BROWNING
and JACQUELINE BENITEZ,
individually and on behalf of all others
similarly situated,

Plaintiffs,

vs.

THOMAS J. VILSACK, Secretary, United
States Department of Agriculture, in his official
capacity; SHALANDA YOUNG, Director of
the United States Office of Management and
Budget, in her official capacity.

Defendants.

Case No.: 3:23-cv-04678

**DECLARATION OF GINA PLATA-NINO
IN SUPPORT OF PLAINTIFFS' EX
PARTE APPLICATION FOR
TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER
AND ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE RE:
PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION**

CLASS ACTION

Hearing Date: September 13, 2023

Time: TBD

Action filed: September 12, 2023

I, Gina Plata-Nino, declare that the facts set forth in this declaration are based on my firsthand knowledge,
and that if called as a witness I could and would competently testify under oath to the following
statements.

1 1. I, Gina Plata-Nino, JD, operate as the SNAP Deputy Director at the Food Research &
2 Action Center (FRAC). I have been working in this role at FRAC for almost a year. I have over 12 years
3 of experience in entitlement and public benefits programs, humanitarian-based immigration law,
4 employment public accommodation rights, and housing law. I am an expert in SNAP having led a legal
5 services program for over six years specifically on expanding and strengthening SNAP. I am an expert in
6 relationship and coalition building to bring about support for different issues. My work also includes
7 experience in legislative, administrative, regulatory, and policy issues impacting families with low
8 incomes, older adults, and other vulnerable populations.

9 2. Since 1970, FRAC has served as the nation's preeminent anti-hunger policy leader by
10 creating and defending successful policies at the federal, state, and local levels that help people struggling
11 against hunger and poverty access the nutrition they need to thrive. FRAC focuses on expanding access
12 and eligibility and improving participation, benefit amounts, and nutrition quality in the federal nutrition
13 programs administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). These include the Supplemental
14 Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants,
15 and Children (WIC), school meals, afterschool and summer nutrition, childcare food, and
16 Pandemic/Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT). As such, FRAC's principal function is the
17 provision of professional advisory, research, and educational services to federal, state, and local agencies,
18 nonprofits, and other stakeholders related to the public management of the federal nutrition programs.

19 3. FRAC is a leading organization in the United States devoted to advocacy on behalf of
20 beneficiaries of national food programs, particularly SNAP, which is one of our principal areas of
21 expertise.

22 4. SNAP is our nation's number one defense against hunger and supports the economy. We
23 have been tracking the hunger cliff caused by the end of the Emergency Allotments (EAs) have had on
24 food insufficiency. As a result of diminished benefits, over 2 million people have experienced food
25 insufficiency.

26 5. We have closely followed research on this ongoing impact exacerbated by the end of the
27 Public Health Emergency and its flexibilities and have found that SNAP recipients have reported not
28

1 having the household essentials they typically need. Recipients also reported being forced to choose
2 between buying food or paying rent and utility and other bills.

3 6. The decrease in SNAP benefits also has impacted grocery retailers. Economists estimate
4 that grocery retailers are set to lose 20 billion this year in sales due to the SNAP benefit reduction caused
5 by the end of Emergency Allotments.

6 7. Considering the Hunger Cliff that SNAP recipients have been facing, we know that any
7 stoppage of benefits will have detrimental consequences to SNAP recipients.

8 8. We are certain a government shutdown will have a negative impactful outcome as the
9 harm was well documented just four years ago during the last major federal shutdown.

10 9. Disrupting these benefits would cause immense harm to the households who rely on the
11 program to eat, overwhelm our partner food assistance agencies, and undermine FRAC's mission to
12 improves the nutrition, health, and well-being of people struggling against poverty-related hunger in the
13 United States.

14 I hereby declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of under the laws of the United
15 States of America that the foregoing is true and correct.

16
17 *Gina Plata-Nino*

18 _____
19 Gina Plata-Nino, JD

9/11/2023

Date